



What Is AA?

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a worldwide organization. It has been in existence since the 1930s. It was started by two men who could not recover from their alcoholism with psychiatry or medicine. AA holds free, open meetings to help people who want to stop being controlled by their need for alcohol. Meetings are available throughout the day and evening, 7 days a week. The principles of AA have been adapted to help people who are dependent on drugs or who have other compulsive disorders, such as gambling or overeating.

Are These Meetings Like Treatment?

No. They are groups of people in recovery helping one another stay abstinent.

Does a Person Need To Enroll or Make an Appointment?

No, just show up. Times and locations of meetings are available through this treatment program or by calling AA directly.

What Are the 12 Steps?

The basis of groups such as AA is the 12 Steps. These beliefs and activities provide a structured program for abstinence. There is a strong spiritual aspect to both the 12 Steps and AA.

The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous*

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

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12-Step Programs

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

What Are CA and NA?

Cocaine Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Other 12-Step groups include Marijuana Anonymous, Pills Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, and more. Here are the Web site addresses for these support groups:

12-Step Programs

- Cocaine Anonymous (CA): www.ca.org
- Narcotics Anonymous (NA): www.na.org
- Marijuana Anonymous (MA): www.marijuana-anonymous.org
- Pills Anonymous (PA): groups.msn.com/PillsAnonymous
- Gamblers Anonymous (GA): www.gamblersanonymous.org
- Overeaters Anonymous (OA): www.oa.org
- Emotions Anonymous (EA): www.emotionsanonymous.org

The methods and principles of the groups are similar although the specific focus differs.

Spinoff groups that use the 12 Steps include Al-Anon and Alateen, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Co-Dependents Anonymous, and Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families. Here are the Web site addresses for some of these support groups:

- Al-Anon and Alateen: www.al-anon.alateen.org
- Nar-Anon: www.naranon.com
- Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACoA): www.adultchildren.org
- Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA): www.codependents.org

Often people go to more than one type of group. Most people shop around for the type of group and the specific meetings that they find most comfortable, relevant, and useful.

What Is CMA?

Crystal Meth Anonymous (www.crystalmeth.org). CMA is a 12-Step group that offers fellowship and support for people who want to stop using meth. CMA meetings are

open to anyone with a desire to end dependence on meth. Like other 12-Step programs, CMA has a spiritual focus and encourages participants to work the 12 Steps with the help of a sponsor. CMA advocates complete abstinence from nonprescribed medication.

What if a Person Is Not Religious?

One can benefit from 12-Step or mutual-help meetings without being religious or working the 12 Steps. Many people in 12-Step and mutual-help groups are not religious. These people may think of the higher power mentioned in the 12 Steps as a bigger frame of reference or a bigger source of knowledge than themselves.

What Do 12-Step Programs Offer?

- A safe place to go during recovery
- A place to meet other people who don't use drugs and alcohol
- A spiritual component to recovery
- Emotional support
- Exposure to people who have achieved long-term abstinence
- A worldwide network of support that is always available

It is strongly recommended that you attend 12-Step or mutual-support meetings while you are in treatment. Ask other clients for help in choosing the best meeting for you. Try several different meetings. Be open to the ways that 12-Step meetings can support your recovery: social, emotional, or spiritual.

